

Guide to Stress Decision Making

Preparation	Accept Stressor	Change Stressor	Eliminate Stressor
<p><i>Equip yourself mentally and physically to cope.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☺ Regular exercise and regular sleep. ☺ Good wholesome eating. ☺ Have fun on a regular basis. ☺ Strong support with family, friends, and co-workers. ☺ Schedule time to relax in the way that works for you, and don't let any other obligations interfere with that time. ☺ Get a massage. ☺ Soak in a hot tub. ☺ Give yourself regular rewards, even for small achievements. ☺ Avoid using food, tobacco, alcohol, or drugs to deal with stress. 	<p><i>Reduce the stress by changing your reaction to it.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☺ Change the way you look at the problem—is this really important enough to be bothering you so much? ☺ Don't demand perfection from yourself and give up expecting it from others, as well. ☺ Look for the positive aspects of a difficult situation. ☺ Increase your humor. Laugh a lot. ☺ Know that the only person you can change is yourself. ☺ Practice love and forgiveness, even for strangers who do dumb things. ☺ If you find yourself worrying obsessively about a problem, make an effort to take your mind off it. 	<p><i>Change the stressor so that it is easier for you.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☺ Alter your physical environment. ☺ Express your feelings calmly when someone or something is bothering you. Don't let resentment build up. ☺ Organize. Plan ahead carefully for events that might be stressful. ☺ Talk to your family and write a contract for changes at home. ☺ Ask for help, and accept it! ☺ Set limits and pace yourself. ☺ Compromise. If you ask someone else to change a little, be willing to do the same. ☺ Take a break from something stressful—the movies, a book, a walk. 	<p><i>Remove yourself from the situation, or reduce the amount of time you spend there.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☺ Figure out what's really important to you and resolve to spend your time on those things. ☺ Learn to say no to those things that are not important to you. Saying no doesn't make you bad or selfish. ☺ If someone else can handle a task for you, ask for help. ☺ Recognize your limits. ☺ Plan ahead to avoid situations that are stressful for you—like traffic. ☺ Quit a commitment that is too much. ☺ Avoid people, topics of conversation, or situations that cause you too much stress if you can.